

A  
LETTER  
FROM  
A GENTLEMAN in TOWN  
TO  
His FRIEND in the Country :

CONTAINING

A COPY of some Authentick PAPERS relative to the Conduct of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, in the Affair of the Settlement of *Inverkeithing*.

CAST DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED, 2 Cor. iv. 9.  
DYING; AND, BEHOLD, WE LIVE, —vi. 9.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by THOMAS LUMSDEN and COMPANY.  
Sold at their Printing-house in the *Fish-market*.  
MCCCLII.

LETTER



A GENTLEMAN'S TOWN

TO

His Friend in the Country

CONTAINING

A Copy of some Antient Papers  
relative to the Conduct of the Proprietors  
of the Company in the Affairs of the  
Government of the Country

Printed by J. Smith, at the Sign of the Crown, in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1734.

LONDON

Printed by Thomas Foulger and Son, at the Sign of the Crown, in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1734.

## LETTER, &amp;c.

SIR,

**M**Y present Situation makes it impracticable for me to comply with your Desire, of publishing a full Narrative of the Proceedings of the Judicatories of this Church, concerning the Settlement of Mr. *Richardson* at *Inverkeithing*; but you will soon see the whole Matter set in a true and proper Light by a more masterly Hand: Mean Time I shall give you a bare Narration of some Facts, from which you may form, without any Commentary, a tolerable Judgment of this important and interesting Affair.

The Commission in *November* last, to go no farther back, appointed by a Majority of Voices, from which a Dissent was entred, the Presbytery of *Dunfermline* to admit Mr. *Richardson* to be Minister of *Inverkeithing*, under Certification of a high Censure to be inflicted in *March*. The Commission in *March*, upon hearing the Reasons of the Presbytery for not obeying these Orders, did not inflict the threatned Censure; whereupon some Members dissented, and then the Commission appointed the Synod of *Fife* to carry the foresaid Settlement into Execution. This Appointment was not complied with by the Synod, and the Assembly on *Monday* the 18th instant, having heard the Dissenters and the Commission, agreed without a Vote, "That the Commission in *March* had exceeded their Powers, and had not done what they

" were



“ were bound to do, conform to the Powers given them by the Assembly.” Thereafter the following Overture was approved of, 102 to 56, “ That the Assembly now appoint the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, to meet at *Inverkeithing* on *Thursday* next, and admit Mr. *Richardson*; that all the Members be ordered to attend; that there be at least five Ministers as a Quorum to execute this Appointment; and that each Minister of that Presbytery be required to appear at the Bar of the Assembly the Day thereafter, and give an Account of his Conduct.”

From this Appointment, a great many Members dissented; as making a very material Alteration in our Constitution, according to which three Ministers are sufficient for constituting a Presbytery; as bringing those Members of that Presbytery, who had openly declared they could not, with a good Conscience, concur in that Settlement, under the unhappy Necessity of Disobeying an express Appointment of the Assembly; And lastly, as preventing Mr. *Richardson*'s Admission from taking Place; seeing it was well known that three Ministers of that Presbytery were ready to admit him, had the Appointment run in general Terms without extending the Quorum to five, which shows by the by, that the Interest of Mr. *Richardson* was but a small Part of the Plan; especially as it is Notour, that this Settlement might have taken Place long ago; in Ways followed by our wiser Predecessors, and of late too; without involving the Church, or bearing hard upon the Consciences of any.

To return; the Presbytery, pursuant to the above Appointment, being called to the Bar, on *Friday* last, and interrogated, If they had obeyed the Order of the Assembly? Mr. *Thomson* answered,





swered, That he, together with Messieurs *Lifton* and *Bathgate*, repaired to the Church of *Inverkeithing*, on *Thursday* at 12 a Clock at Noon, where they staid till Two; and then took Instruments, that there not being a Quorum, they could not proceed to the Settlement; Mr. *Steedman* sent a Letter of Excuse, with an Attestation from his Physician of his bad State of Health; Mr. *Stoddart* pled his peculiar Situation, which made him incline not to act any Part at all in this Matter; Mr. *Stark* of *Kinross* represented, That the main Difficulty which lay in his Way of carrying Mr. *Richardson's* Settlement into Execution, took Rise from the Sentence of the Commission, appointing the Callers of Mr. *Richardson* to prosecute his Transportation, independently of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, and from the Act of the Presbytery of *Biggar* transporting him to *Inverkeithing*, while at the same Time they continued his Relation to his present Parish of *Broughton*; and as the Assembly, by their Act appointing Mr. *Richardson's* Settlement, had removed these Objections, he was willing, for the Sake of his Brethren, who were straitened in Point of Conscience, to expose himself at all Hazards, and concur with the other three Ministers who had Freedom to go on with the Settlement. Messieurs *Stark* of *Torryburn*, *Hunter* of *Saline*, *Gillespie* of *Carnock*, *Daling* of *Cleish*, *Fernie* of *Dunfermline*, and *Spence* of *Orwel*, gave in a Representation, containing the Reasons of their declining to have an active Hand in that Settlement, as Matters now stand; the Tenor whereof follows.

Unto

Unto the very Reverend, The Moderator, and the Reverend and Honourable Members of the Venerable Assembly of the Church of Scotland, met at *Edinburgh*, May 1752: The humble REPRESENTATION of the Ministers of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, whose Names are hereunto subjoined.

WE cannot but be deeply affected with our present Situation, in being obliged to stand at the Bar of this Venerable Assembly, to answer for Non-compliance with any of their Ap-  
pointments.

But, as this Venerable Court is so good, as to allow us to speak in our own Behalf; we shall therefore beg leave humbly to represent some of those Things which have all along straitned us in the Execution of the Orders we received, and which still lay such Difficulties in our Way, as we are not able to surmount. — And this we hope to do with that Plainness and Honesty, and at the same Time with that decent and dutiful Respect to the supreme Judicatory of this Church, which it is so justly entitled to expect from us.

We need scarce observe, how unjustly we have been represented, as having no other Difficulty, but the unreasonable Fear of opposing the ill-grounded Prejudices of our People.

Nor need we inform this House, That ever since the Act restoring Patronages, in the End of Queen *Ann*'s Reign, there has been a vehement Opposition to all Settlements by Presentations, where  
there

there was but small Concurrence \*; which Settlements have already produced a Train of the most unhappy Consequences, greatly affecting the Interest of Religion; and, if turned into the stated and fixed Rule of Procedure, will, in all Probability, be attended with every fatal Effect. Now, under such a View and Apprehension as this, was it any Wonder, or was it inconsistent with that Obedience which we owe to our earthly Superiors in the LORD, that we should demur and stop short in carrying a Settlement into Execution, where, in our Apprehension, there was by no means such a Concurrence of Persons residing in the Parish, as might give sufficient Weight and Influence for promoting the great Ends of the Ministry.

The Assembly know well, That it appears from their own Acts and Resolutions, entred into their Records, that the Law of Patronage has been considered as no small Grievance to this Church, not to say as inconsistent with our Union Settlement.

And we find it declared, Act 25th of *May* 1736, " That it is, and has been since the Reformation, the Principle of this Church, That no Minister shall be intruded into any Parish, contrary to the Will of the Congregation; and therefore it is seriously recommended, by the said Act, to all Judicatories of this Church, to have a due Regard to the said Principle in planting vacant Congregations,—so as none be intruded into such Parishes, as they regard the Glory of GOD, and the Edification of the Body of CHRIST:" Which Recommendation, we humbly apprehend, to be strongly supported by the Principles of Reason, and the Laws of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

And

\* i. e. Very few in the Parish, who could be brought to attend on the Ministry of the Presentee; or to be willing to have him for their Pastor.



And we must be permitted to say, That after repeated Endeavours used by Committees of the Presbytery, to lessen the Opposition to Mr. *Richardson* in the Parish of *Inverkeithing*, Matters still remain in such a Situation, that we are brought to this unhappy Dilemma, either of coming under the Imputation of Disobedience to a particular Order of our Ecclesiastical Superiors; or contributing our Part to the Establishment of Measures, which we can neither reconcile with the declared Principles, nor with the true Interest of this Church. On the whole, we cannot help thinking, That, by having an active Hand in carrying Mr. *Richardson's* Settlement into Execution, we should, as Matters now stand, have been the unhappy Instruments, to speak in the Language of Holy Writ, of scattering the Flock of CHRIST; not to mention what may be the fatal Consequences of such Settlements to our happy Civil Constitution.

If the Venerable Assembly shall, on this Account, judge us guilty of such criminal Disobedience, as to deserve their Censures; we trust they will, at least, allow that we have acted as honest Men, willing to forego every secular Advantage for Conscience Sake.

In such an Event, this, through Grace, shall be our Support, That not being charged with any Neglect of the Duties of our Ministry among those committed to our Care; we are to suffer for adhering to what we apprehend to be the Will of our great LORD and Master; whose we are, whom we are bound to serve in all Things, and for whom we cast all our Care. Signed by ROBERT STARK, DAVID HUNTER, THOMAS GILLESPIE, ALEX. DALING, THOMAS FERNIE, and JOHN SPENCE; and dated, *Edinburgh, 22d May 1758.*

Partion being removed, a Debate ensued, and after several Overtures were proposed, the Question was put, **DEPOSE** One, or Not; and ye carried into the Affirmative 93 to 65; from which several Members dissented. The Assembly delayed till next Day to fix upon the Person, when the fore said Messieurs *Stark of Tainish, Hunter, Gillespie, Dalrymple, Fernie and Spangh*, having been sifted again at the Bar, adhered to their former Representation; and being interrogated, if they had any Thing further to add, *Mr. Gillespie* gave in the following Paper.

Unto the Very Reverend, the Moderator, and the Reverend and Honourable Members of the Venerable Assembly of the Church of Scotland, met at Edinburgh, May 1752: The humble REPRESENTATION of *Thomas Gillespie* Minister of the Gospel at Carnock.

**T**HAT whereas, in the Representation given in to the General Assembly Yesterday, it was set forth amongst other Things, "That it appears from their own Acts and Resolutions entered into their Records, That the Law of Patronage has been considered as no small Grievance to this Church, not to say inconsistent with our Union Settlement." And whereas this Paragraph expressed, as it is apprehended, in the softest Terms, was considered by some Members as an Aggravation of our Non-compliance with their Order: I humbly beg leave to lay before this House, a Paragraph or two taken from a Paper entitled, *The Grounds of the Claim of the Church of*

B

Scotland

Scotland for the Redress of the Grievance of Patronage, entred into the Records of the Assembly on the 22d of May 1736. There, after representing the Laws respecting our Church, the Assembly will find these remarkable Words, " That notwithstanding the Security of this our happy Establishment in all its Parts was as great and solemn, as it was possible for Human Laws and Constitutions to devise or execute; yet in Prejudice of that Security, as we apprehend, the Act in the Tenth Year of Queen Anne was pass'd, restoring to Patrons the Power of Presenting, &c." And the said Paper concludes with these Words, " That this Grievance was brought upon us contrary to the Establishment of this Church made at the glorious Revolution, and solemnly confirm'd and secured, as an essential Condition of the Union of the two Kingdoms." It is now humbly submitted, if we have offended by saying as above, " That the Law of Patronage has been considered as no small Grievance to the Church, not to say inconsistent with our Union Settlement." And I humbly crave, that the whole of the foresaid Grounds of Claim may be read, and that this my Representation may be entered into the Records of Court, or kept in *retentis* with other Papers. Signed, THOMAS GILLESPIE.

To these Clauses, he might have added another, which merits particular Attention, taken from the same Grounds of Claim, for Redress of the Law Patronages, viz. " That it is well known, and has always been declared, that the foresaid Act of Queen Anne, restoring Patronages, was imposed upon this Church by Means of Persons of our own Country, who were Enemies to the Protestant Succession, as they soon afterwards



"wards discovered in the strongest Manner; and  
 "Enemies to this Church, by Reason of her in-  
 "violable Adherence to that Succession; and was  
 "by them intended to afflict and oppress this  
 "Church; and create Discontents among the Peo-  
 "ple therein, and to open a Door for Patrons  
 "arbitrarily to impose upon the People as Mini-  
 "sters, Persons proper for instilling into their  
 "Minds Principles of Disloyalty and Disaffection  
 "to our present happy Constitution."

Now, tho' one would imagine that a Person, so deeply interested as Mr. Gillespie in a Matter of such Consequence, might have been allowed, without Offence, to appeal to the Assemblies own Acts and Resolutions in support of what he and his Brethren had alledged concerning the Judgment of this Church with respect to the Law of Patronages, and the unhappy Consequences flowing from the rigorous Exercise thereof, as one great Bar in the Way of their obeying the Orders they had received; yet his Defence was rejected, and that too, not without some severe Reflections for presuming to vindicate himself in this Manner: DEPOSITION was the Word; It had been openly talk'd without Doors, that the Sentence would fall on Mr. Gillespie: and, after Prayer to God in the Assembly, the Question being put, Who of the Six should be deposed? 102 declined giving their Voice, and only 56 voted, of whom 52 gave it against Mr. Gillespie.

And thus was this good Man, without a Libel, or any formal Process, arraigned, cast, and condemned, all in the Space of 24 Hours; merely, for Non-compliance with a particular Order of an Assembly, appointing him to have an active Hand in carrying a Settlement into Execution, contrary to the

the Will of the Congregation; which he could neither reconcile with the true Interest nor with the Constitution and standing Laws of this Church; and which therefore he could not comply with, without being guilty, in his Apprehension, of a manifest Violation of the Solemn Vows and Engagements he came under, when admitted Minister of Carnock.

And on what Principle could such a Sentence be founded but this, "That every Minister of this Church is bound, under the Penalty of Summar Deposition, to execute every Sentence, and obey every Order of any General Assembly; or of their Commission, whose Quorum is no more than 31; however inconsistent, in his Apprehension, with the fixt Principles and standing Rules of the Church; and however contrary it be to the Light of his own Mind; and that even when the Sentence might be easily brought into Execution another Way."

But to proceed, the Presbytery being called in, the Sentence of Deposition was pronounced from the Chair in the following Words; "The General Assembly did, and hereby do, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ the Sole King and Head of the Church, and by Vertue of the Power and Authority committed by him to them, Depose Mr. Thomas Gillespie Minister at Carnock from the Office of the holy Ministry, prohibiting and discharging him to exercise the same or any Part thereof, within this Church in all Time coming: And the Assembly did and hereby do Declare the Church and Parish of Carnock Vacant from and after the Day and Date of this Sentence."

This

This Sentence Mr. Gillespie heard with the most becoming Gravity, and spoke as follows;

**MODERATOR;**

I desire to receive this Sentence of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, pronounced against me, with real Concern, and awful Impressions of the Divine Conduct in it: But I rejoice, that to me it is given in Behalf of CHRIST, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his Sake.

These Words were uttered with such Christian Meekness, and at the same Time, with all the Dignity of conscious Innocence, that his warmest Opposers were greatly moved, and seem to feel some Relentings for what they have done.

And they must forgive me to say, That the Church of Scotland can boast of no Member more Honest and Sincere, or of no Minister more Pious and Faithful than that very Man, who, by an Act of Church Authority, has been singled out as unworthy of her Communion.

He is now no more a Minister of the established Church: And to this Sentence, however severe, he has humbly submitted in its full Extent; readily renouncing all the temporal Emoluments arising from the legal Establishment.

He would not so much as preach last Lord's Day in the Church of Carnock; nor allow the Bell



to be rung; but repaired to the open Fields: And having chosen for his Text the Words of the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 16. *Necessity is laid upon me; yea, Wo is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.* He told his Hearers, That tho' the Assembly had deposed him from being a Minister in the established Church, for not doing what he believed it was sinful for him to do; yet he hoped, thro' Grace, no publick Disputes should be his Theme; but Jesus and him crucified: And desired, at all Seasons, to have it in his Eye, That *the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God*: and then went on, to lay before them the great and important Truths of the everlasting Gospel, without one reflecting Word on all that had past.

May his great Lord and Master continue to animate him with the same Spirit of Meekness and Wisdom, that he may fulfil the Ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus, having a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man.

When some Members have had such an active Hand in depriving themselves of Mr. Gillespie's Instructions, I hope they will permit a Layman to exhort them in the Words of an Inspired Writer, *Be ye in Readiness to revenge all Disobedience, when your Obedience is fulfilled.*—And the Publick may expect at least, that CONSCIENCE will be no more talk'd of, as a mere Pretext; when we have seen, not only Mr. Gillespie, but also so many of his Brethren, greatly pleading, what they apprehend to be the Cause of Almighty God, the Interest of Jesus, and Liberty of Conscience, under the immediate View of losing their worldly All.

I thought to have given you some Account of the Scene which opened on Sabbath last in *Dunfermline, Inverkeithing, &c.* after receiving an Account of the Assembly's Proceedings; but choole to leave this to others, lest I might be charged as intending to increase the Flame.

You have now heard of the Beginning of Sorrows; but when and where it shall end, God only knows. I am,

S I R,

*Yours, &c.*

May 28.

1752.

I thought to have given you some Account of  
the Scene which opened on Sabbath last in the  
Assembly, &c. after receiving an  
Account of the Assembly; but chose  
to leave this to others, intending to insert it  
You have now heard the beginning of the  
rows; but when and where it shall end, God only  
knows. I am

